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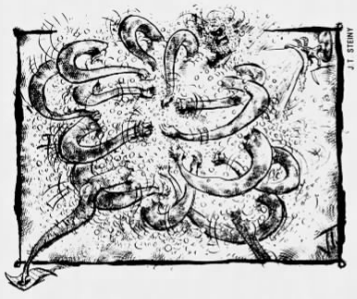
HUMOR

BY RICHARD MELTZER



Guilt Moistens the Tub

Well I've come up with a new version, a new *speed* version, and I'm glad. Never again will I tackle my

1—face & beard
2—ears, back of neck
3—hair & beard (shampoo)
4—back
5—pits, arms, shoulders, chest, belly
6—crotch & ass
7—left leg & foot, right leg to ankle
8—right foot

in that exact (and exacting) sequence. Never again will I waste so much *time*. In my biggest breakthrough since eliminating step 9 (shaving), I've honed the bastard down to a streamlined 5-stepper:

(1)—1 and 2, as above (but continuous)
(2)—5 through 7, ditto
(3)—8, as above (unchanged)
(4)—4, ditto
(5)—3, ditto.

By continuous I of course mean one rinsing, once under the spigot at the finish of a given scrub cycle. (Suds on, suds off.) Anything else is patently absurd, *has* been absurd, and finally after thousands of repetitions I've learned — no more superfluous rinse-offs! — never again.

From now on the only fits and starts'll be if I gotta stop 'n' rinse midway through (2) 'cause my h_____s're active and soap-suds sting 'em, or the eyes get shampoo-stung in the course of (5). Neither of which was the case in my first trial run — done! clean! — and I don't foresee problems since switching to Johnson's Babe Shampoo. "No more tears" — I use it *in* my eyes.

Yup, to fend off the dread BLEPHARITIS ("crusty 'lids"), for which docs prescribe "one drop Johnson's to 5-6 drops water. Dip swab in solution and scrub eyelids, avoiding . . ." *Drop dip* — didn't Dion sing that? — but I'll *never* sing in showers, only scrub.

Scrub-a-dub, scrub-a-doo, not a care in the world except . . . well, no *new* cares — showers don't add 'em — but warts remain worrisome. Not one, not two but THREE on my little right piggy-stayed-homs. And where do they come from? *Scien:e doesn't know.* Viruses? *That's right.* (But not much is known.) Could be I have got AIDS and am therefore susceptible to sundry invading what-thems — but that ain't the stuff to lose sleep over while in the tub.

No, not with the clear and present danger of living wart viruses virusing about menacingly in the unprotected waters about your feet. Soap is protection — well, *maybe* — but who's to protect the soap???

You, I mean me, I've gotta admit how ingenious it was to REMOVE SOAP FROM HANDS following step 7, old system, and now (2). Well there *is* soap in hands, actually *on*, but no doggone bar to directly engage killer warts. If suds can't do it, what hope (I ask) has a bar? So we give the ol' bar a well-deserved rest, but not before lathering them digits for a wartfoot blitz offensive — suds on, zoooom, suds off. 'Stead of risking an infected bar and, in turn, tomorrow's face or, by our new #'s, today's aching back. (And if hands, perish the thought, should in spite of all precautions turn to toadskin, better hands than back, face — or possibly even park.)

Backs . . . fronts. But what about sides? (Ribcage.) Sides're touched on during both (2) and (4). If all goes well, if both these scrubbings are strategic, tactical and above all conscientious, the "touches" will intersect and, with any luck at all, they will *overlap*. (Side dirt gone!) And why *add* a step, a time-consuming side step, after already banging a dent in showertime's claim to our precious LIFE time? (Why do you suppose they call them shower *stalls*?)

"What ever shall I do with all the time I will save?" (A good question.)

And the greatest savings have to be those in the twin realms of WAITING ¶for the tub to drain) and CLEANUP (shorter drain time means reduced accumulations of gunk and scum) made possible by the shrewd move of delaying the shampoo phase from 3 to (5), i.e., from early to late in the game. Late hair =reduced clog time. I congratulate myself on the move, and have thus earned the right to not only a beard but the otherwise extraneous steps (1b) and (5b) (and, retroactively, 1b/3b) as well. Well done!

With the time saved I can take up skydiving . . . shop for a house . . . lobby in the state capital in behalf of cripples and gimps . . . visit Indiana . . . lose 30 pounds . . . gain 80 pounds . . . write *War and Peace* one word at a time on the back of my stamp collection . . . no limit to the things I can do! □

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